

Letters To The Editor



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Bernie Public Library Needs Your Assistance

SEPTEMBER 29TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Bernie Public Library Needs Your Assistance

*Submitted Article to
news@showmetimes.com*

Bernie, Missouri – Looking for Volunteers

Historically the Bernie Public Library has frequently depended on the service and commitment of community volunteers as well as the hard work of our loving librarian, Ms. Sandy Stone. The skills and talents of both types of workers bring our library's mission of providing comprehensive resources and services in support of the research, teaching, and learning needs of the Bernie community to life.

During the past year there has been a steady decline in community volunteering. We would like to ask for your assistance in organizing a "Friends of the Bernie Public Library" volunteer group. Volunteering would consist of helping with the Bernie Public Library's spring and fall fundraisers and occasionally assisting Ms. Sandy when she is in need of an extra hand at the library.

"Friends of the Bernie Public Library" membership entitles you to advance notice and reservations for special library events, advance notice of new materials available at the library, and a quarterly newsletter from the Bernie Public Library Board.

If you are interested in being a part of our “Friends of the Bernie Public Library” group please contact Ms Sandy Stone at 573-293-4383 or stop by the library and pick up an application. Your service would be greatly appreciated.

The library is located at 111 N. Allen St.

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Johnny Cash Family, fans, and Friends Celebrate Grand Opening of Boyhood Home

AUGUST 21ST 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Johnny Cash Family, fans, and Friends Celebrate Grand Opening of Boyhood Home](#)

*Submitted Article to
news@showmetimes.com*

Dyess, Arkansas - Hundreds of fans and friends joined the Johnny Cash family for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and celebration at the grand opening of the Cash boyhood home here Saturday. The ceremony crowned the restoration of the structure that was home to the Cash family from 1935 until 1953.

“If Dad walked into the house today, he would have been overcome,” said Rosanne Cash, one of Johnny’s four daughters, at the dedication ceremony.

The dedication came on the heels of the fourth annual Johnny Cash Music Festival at Arkansas State University’s Convocation Center Friday evening. The sold-out concert featured Country Music Hall of Fame members Loretta Lynn, Reba McEntire and Bobby Bare. Singer and comedian Mark Lowry served as the event emcee.

People lined up early Saturday morning at the Dyess Administration Building to board the shuttles for the short two-and-a-half mile drive to the home. A private viewing for the Cash family was first on the agenda, as members toured the five-room home newly furnished with retrieved family items and donations.

“When many people approach me about starting Johnny Cash projects, I usually say ‘no,’ Rosanne Cash explained. “But, in talking to Dr. Ruth Hawkins and Arkansas State University, I realized several things and one is that my children need to know their family legacy. It’s so beautiful.”

“From when I saw the house in 2011 and to see the progress today is overwhelming,” continued Rosanne. “Ruth and the family aimed for authenticity when it came to furnishings. When you add the pieces in the house, it gives it resonance. The whole project caused a real shift in my life.”

Following additional remarks by Dyess Mayor Larry Sims, President of the Arkansas State System Dr. Chuck Welch, a letter from Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe, Johnny Cash’s sister Joanne Cash Yates, brother Tommy Cash and others, Cash family members surrounded Joanne as she clipped the leaf garland ribbon to declare the home as officially opened. Family members then delighted the crowd by singing “Will The Circle Be Unbroken,” inviting them to join in.

Following the festivities, buses were loaded with fans to take the hourly tours of the home until late afternoon.

Hawkins, the executive director of Arkansas State's Heritage Sites program, began work on the boyhood home project in 2009 and visualized turning the land with a dilapidated, run-down structure back into to the simple glory that was the home where one of the most talented and celebrated superstars spent his childhood and teen years. She spearheaded the development from the beginning, including the purchase of the home by Arkansas State to the final furnishing.

The Dyess Colony was created in 1934 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal to aid in the nation's economic recovery from the Great Depression. As a federal agricultural resettlement community, it provided a fresh start for nearly 500 impoverished Arkansas farm families, including the family of Johnny Cash.

After Rosanne expressed the family's "tremendous gratitude," Joanne added, "Thank you for being a part of our family—all of you."

Tommy closed by saying, "Thank you. This is one of the greatest projects I've ever worked on. Growing up here, I was a happy child."

The Historic Dyess Colony: Boyhood Home of Johnny Cash is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. It is closed Sundays, Mondays and major holidays. Admission is \$10 and includes the Dyess Colony Museum and the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home.

Shown in the photo: Rosanne Cash, daughter of country music superstar Johnny Cash, addresses the crowd at Saturday's grand opening dedication ceremony for the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home in Dyess, Ark.

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Johnny Cash Music Festival Officially Sold Out

AUGUST 13TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

Johnny Cash Music Festival Officially Sold Out

*Submitted Article to
news@showmetimes.com*

Jonesboro, Arkansas - The fourth annual Johnny Cash Music Festival is officially sold out as of today, according to a joint announcement made by festival producer Bill Carter and Tim Dean, director of Arkansas State University's Convocation Center. The concert stars Reba McEntire, Loretta Lynn and Bobby Bare, three Country Music Hall of Fame members, and is scheduled for 7 p.m. Friday, Aug. 15, at the Convocation Center on the campus of Arkansas State University.

"It's always rewarding to be a part of a sold-out show," said Carter. "But this show is especially gratifying because the money is going to two great causes – completion of the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home in Dyess, and college scholarships to Arkansas State in Johnny's name. Every artist who has played this festival and Johnny's children, are very proud that Johnny's legacy helps young people get an education."

"We are ecstatic to have this amazing talent at our event this year," said Dean. "To have three Country Music Hall of Fame members on the same stage outside of Nashville is a feat in itself, and that has been a big factor in this concert selling out. But it's also because the event itself has grown legs of its own and has a worldwide reputation. In fact, we have fans from four different countries represented at this year's show. It is gratifying to

know that future generations will have the opportunity to embrace where Johnny Cash came from when they visit his Boyhood Home."

"I can't think of a better way to begin the next stage of our relationship with the Cash family legacy than a sold-out crowd for this year's festival," Arkansas State Chancellor Tim Hudson said. "With the opening of the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home on Saturday, it is a fitting tribute to our years of collaboration. We want to thank all the artists over the past four years who contributed their talents to our concerts, to their thousands of fans and our local sponsors. Their combined support has made possible the restoration as well as a scholarship endowment for students with very similar backgrounds to the Cash family to attend Arkansas State."

Over the past four years, a portion of the money raised at each concert has gone towards the purchase and refurbishing of Cash's Boyhood Home in Dyess, Ark. Cash and his family lived in the home from 1935 through December 1953. On Aug. 16, the site will have its official grand opening with a dedication ceremony set to start at 10 a.m. CT. While the concert is sold out, fans of the superstar still have an opportunity to visit his Boyhood Home. A limited number of tickets for opening day are still available and can be purchased at Tickets.AState.edu.

The Johnny Cash Boyhood Home was part of a community established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s as a Depression-era agricultural resettlement colony. Part of the New Deal program, it provided an opportunity for destitute farmers, who were advanced 20 or 40 acres of farmland, a mule, a small home and money to buy food and plant crops—with the understanding that if they were successful they'd pay back the government.

"I lived the first 17 years of my life in that house," said Joanne Cash Yates, Johnny's younger sister and an integral part of the refurbishing of the house. "Little by little, every piece found its place. It has been a wonderful process. They say you can't go back, but Tommy (Cash's brother) and I went back today and we thank everyone for that. Every item in the house is where it was then. What you see in the house is what we had. There were a whole lot of tears today, but it's been such joy."

Recalling memories during a special VIP tour of the home, Joanne Cash Yates added, "Momma's piano was such a peaceful thing for her to play. It was healing for her and to get away from the farm for a while. John would make cocoa, sugar fudge with peanuts, and sit and listen to the radio."

Dr. Ruth Hawkins, head of the university's Heritage Sites program, is the guiding force behind the restoration project. The project serves as a laboratory for Arkansas State students in the Heritage Studies Ph.D. program. Students have done much of the research and are assisting with oral history interviews, interpretation, programming and other aspects of the project. The Administration Building and the Cash boyhood home represent the first phase of the master plan.

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Loretta Lynn, Reba McEntire, & Bobby Bare to Perfrom

JUNE 23RD 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Loretta Lynn, Reba McEntire, & Bobby Bare to Perfrom](#)

Submitted Article to

Jonesboro, Arkansas - The clock is ticking for the weekend of August 15-16 in anticipation of the fourth annual Johnny Cash Music Festival and the grand opening of the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home. The festival is Friday, Aug. 15, and the official grand opening of the home follows on Saturday, Aug. 16.

A VIP Inspection Tour of “Historic Dyess Colony: Boyhood Home of Johnny Cash” was held at Dyess Colony Circle in April. Members of the Cash family, along with invited guests and members of the media toured the area that is among Arkansas State University’s Heritage Sites. Since the VIP Inspection Tour in April, ticket sales have soared for the concert. The grand opening is open to the public.

“I lived the first 17 years of my life in that house,” said Joanne Cash Yates, Johnny’s sister, at the VIP tour. “Little by little, every piece found its place. It has been a wonderful process. They say you can’t go back, but Tommy and I went back today and we thank everyone for that. Every item in the house is where it was then. What you see in the house is what we had. There were a whole lot of tears today, but it’s been such joy.

“Momma’s piano was such a peaceful thing for her to play. It was healing for her and to get away from the farm for a while. John would make cocoa, sugar fudge with peanuts, and sit and listen to the radio.”

The Johnny Cash Boyhood Hometown Project is expected to draw approximately 50,000 visitors annually, resulting in nearly \$10 million in tourism-related income to the region.

The Johnny Cash Music Festival is presented annually by Arkansas State University, with participation by the Cash family, to benefit the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home Project. The fourth music festival for 2014 is Aug. 15 at 7 p.m. at the Arkansas State Convocation Center.

As in years past, proceeds from this year’s event will help fund the restoration project, as well as support a scholarship fund established in the international superstar’s name.

Country Music Hall of Famers Reba McEntire, Bobby Bare and Loretta Lynn will perform at this year’s festival and legendary singer and comedian Mark Lowry will host the event.

Tickets for the Johnny Cash Music Festival are available at Arkansas State’s Central Box

Office and online at tickets.astate.edu. Tickets can also be purchased by logging onto the official website of the Johnny Cash Music Festival, johnnycashmusicfest.com. Call to purchase tickets toll-free at 1-888-278-3267 or 870-972-2781.

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Reba McEntire to Headline Johnny Cash Festival

JUNE 14TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

[Reba McEntire to Headline Johnny Cash Festival](#)

Submitted Article to

news@showmetimes.com

Jonesboro, Arkansas - This year's fourth annual Johnny Cash Music Festival at Arkansas State University's Convocation Center in Jonesboro on Aug. 15 is shaping up to

be a country music superstar spectacular, what with Queen of Country Music Loretta Lynn, newly enshrined Country Music Hall of Famer Bobby Bare and multi-format and media sensation Reba McEntire sharing the bill.

In fact, McEntire, herself a Country Music Hall of Famer (as is Lynn, of course), has been wanting to perform at the Festival for years, but her many activities, last year including her TV series *Malibu Country*, got in the way.

“We’re not doing the show anymore, and we made a point of coordinating our concert dates this year so we could do Johnny’s festival,” says McEntire, who was gently swayed by Bill Carter, the festival’s producer and founder, and her former manager (she’s now managed by her husband Narvel Blackstock).

“Bill’s a very inspiring person, and if he believes in something, you better take notice!” McEntire continues. “His word goes a long way for me and Narvel, so we penciled in the date and then put it in ink—and now we’re doing it.”

Both Lynn and Bare were contemporaries of Johnny Cash. Although McEntire is younger and didn’t achieve her own country chart dominance until the mid-1980s, she too, has a deep connection to the Man in Black.

“In 1991, when the plane crash happened, we asked Waylon Jennings to speak at the funeral,” says McEntire, recalling the event that tragically claimed the lives of eight of her band members.

“He said, ‘I just can’t do it. It’s way too close to what happened to me.’”

Jennings was playing bass for Buddy Holly in 1959, and was going to fly with him to the gig following their appearance in Clear Lake, Iowa—but gave up his seat to J.P. Richardson—a.k.a. The Big Bopper who perished along with Holly and Ritchie Valens when that plane crashed.

“I said, ‘Waylon, I totally understand,’” McEntire continues. “So I asked Johnny—who had just buried his mother—and he came and spoke.”

McEntire had performed with Cash once, in Switzerland.

“I didn’t know him really well personally, but my good friend did,” she says. “Johnny understood that someone was needing some comforting: We put people on a pedestal and

think they're immortal and beyond perfect, but they have hearts and feelings and care. For Johnny to come and speak at the memorial was so sweet and special for all the families, and meant the world to them."

McEntire is especially glad to support the Johnny Cash Music Festival's charitable endeavors, which include the restoration of his boyhood home in Dyess, Ark., and a scholarship fund established in his name.

"Getting kids in college is very important to me," says McEntire, "and refurbishing Johnny's boyhood home is such a cool idea."

Meanwhile, McEntire is focusing on her own cool idea in spreading a positive message via her new composition "Pray for Peace."

"That's been a big project for me," she says. "I was walking around on my place in Tennessee, and just started singing the words 'pray for peace' and got the biggest chills and said, 'Wow! That's a song.' Then every time I went out walking I came up with more of the song."

She eventually brought the song to the studio and recorded it, and is now asking her fans to contribute to a YouTube video for the song that she's just posted.

"I'm asking the fans to submit clips of them, from wherever they are in the world," says McEntire. "I want them to invite their friends, family and co-workers to film and upload themselves doing the 'Pray for Peace' motions in the video in spreading a message of peace, from a location that shows where they are in the world—like a landmark or scenic view."

"If we can reach an agreement on praying for peace, maybe I'll settle down!" she adds.

Until then, McEntire remains busy as ever.

"We've been doing concerts all year long," she says, noting also her appearance in Nashville at the May 6 "We're All 4 the Hall" benefit concert for the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. And projecting ahead to the Johnny Cash Music Festival, she says she's particularly excited to see her fellow headliners, though she singles Bare out.

"I haven't worked with Bare in years!" she says. "I'm really looking forward to it!"

"Tickets for this concert have sold very quickly," said Haley Stout, manager of the University's Central Box Office. "I encourage anyone who wants to see it to get their tickets as soon as they can because we have only a few at each price level left and we expect an early sell-out."

Tickets for the Johnny Cash Music Festival are on sale now and available at Arkansas State's Central Box Office (1-888-278-3267) and online at Tickets.AState.edu. Tickets can also be purchased by logging onto the official website of the Johnny Cash Music Festival: JohnnyCashMusicFest.com.

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